

022P83=  
L57<sup>C</sup>

Port Sunlight. Lady Lever Art Gallery

An English Maecenas.

Port -  
L57P83



## LETTERS - AND - ART

LITERATURE DRAMA MUSIC FINE-ARTS EDUCATION CULTURE

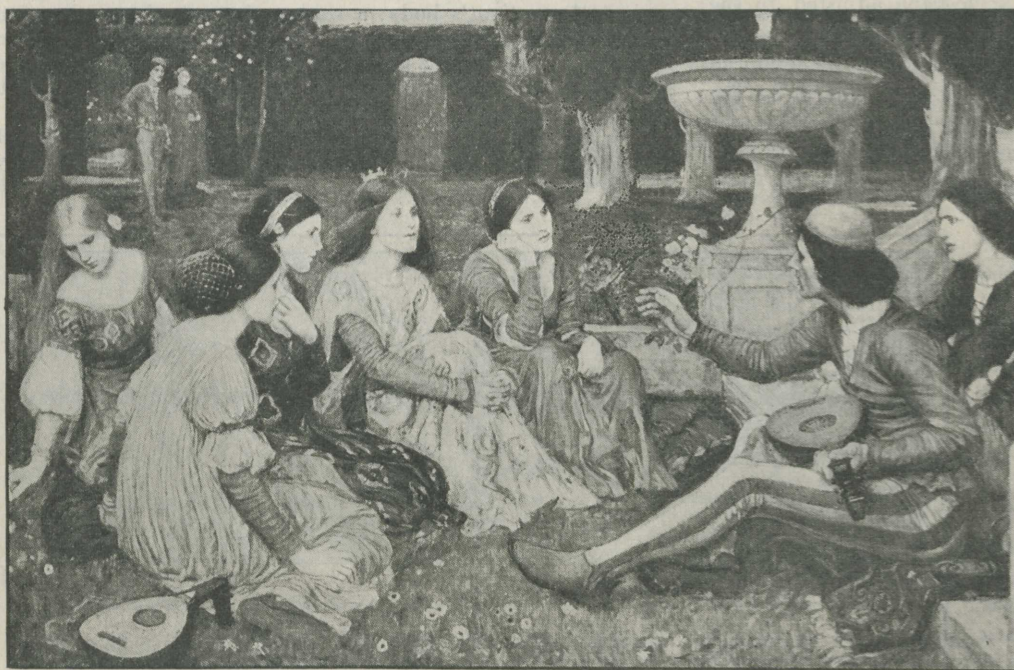
## AN ENGLISH MÆCENAS

**L**ORD LEVERHULME was the English Henry Ford—or if sensibilities are shocked, it may be stated the other way round, tho it was an English journalist who made the comparison. Much has been written about the business acumen of the maker of Sunlight Soap, but in the notices of the man who died May 7 it is often overlooked that he had other sides; that he was fond of dancing, which he didn't do very well; that he told excellent stories, and kept the floor because he was stone

especially interesting types of art, and in this way a series of collections has been accumulated, of which several are almost unrivaled in their particular spheres." English paintings of equal number and value may be found in other English collections, but their advantage here is that they do not compete with foreign schools. Quoting from R. R. Tatlock's article in *The Art News*:

"The eighteenth century is fairly well represented by portraits. Sir Joshua Reynolds has the delightful double portrait of 'Miss

Paine and Miss Polly Paine,' daughters of James Paine, the architect. It shows, on the spectator's right, two young ladies seated at a musical instrument, while on the left is a window through which the sky is seen. A tit-bit of information connected with the window may be sufficiently entertaining to record. While preparing a catalog of the pictures for Lord Leverhulme I was struck by the oddity of the composition of the picture, with both of the figures on one side of the canvas, which is unusual in Reynolds's work. Close examination of the pigment revealed traces of another figure occupying the part of the canvas now occupied by the window, and investigation in early literary sources proved that Reynolds had originally painted the two beautiful young ladies in the company of their mother. Obviously some former owner of the picture found it more agreeable or more remunerative to eliminate the old lady. Perhaps Lord Leverhulme's trustees will consent to restore the painting to its original



Pictures by courtesy of *The Art News*, New York

## "THE STORY OF THE DECAMERON"

J. W. Waterhouse paints the picture of the group who seek, by poetic and musical diversion, to forget the plague that rages in Florence near by. It is one of the "story-telling" pictures in the Lady Lever Art Gallery at Port Sunlight so characteristic of nineteenth century English art.

deaf. "He was a very good speaker, full of good stories, especially after dinner," says Harold Spender in *The Contemporary Review* (London). "But he was at his best when he was talking of his people at Port Sunlight. He loved his people." He collected a large and interesting gallery of pictures at his Hampstead house, tho Mr. Spender speaks doubtfully of some of these. "His rough treatment of the Orpen and Johns pictures really showed his view of modern English portraiture. He could never understand the modern artist's idea of seizing a portrait commission as an opportunity of insulting his victim." He also formed a picture collection which is "the most English museum in England." It is a memorial to his wife, and is called the Lady Lever Art Gallery, situated at Port Sunlight, across the Mersey from Liverpool. "Lord Leverhulme had an unquenchable passion for English art, not only for paintings, but for every sort of work of art that reflected in any degree the spirit of the English race." Doubtless many modern critics who condemn English "story-telling" painting, will not be grateful to him for his versatility. A long account of the museum is printed in the June 13 number of *The Art News* (New York), where we read that "attention has been concentrated on endeavoring to bring together the finest specimens of a limited number of

nal condition, which in all probability would not be very difficult.

"At least one other example of Reynolds is noteworthy. Every one has heard of the painting by Reynolds of Elizabeth, one of the beautiful Misses Gunning of Georgian times; and most people have heard of Gainsborough's charming late portrait of Princess Augusta Sophia, second daughter of George III; of Romney's 'Sarah Rodbard,' of Hoppner's 'Lady Elizabeth Howard,' of Lawrence's 'Elizabeth, Countess of Derby,' and of Wilkie's portrait of Queen Victoria. Wilson, Turner, Girtin, Cozens, and Etty are all well represented. There is a magnificent example of John Crome, 'Marlingford Grove'; and a fine Constable, 'East Bergholt Mill.' The latter has also a modest but wonderfully beautiful water-color drawing of East Bergholt Church, which has a curious and touching history. When it was painted in 1810, Constable, as a youth, was deep in love with Miss Bicknell, the granddaughter of the rector of East Bergholt, who, skeptical of the young genius's prospects, made it his business to separate the pair. Constable having departed to London, sent the drawing of the church to his mother who, with or without a hint from her son, presented it to the rector in Constable's name. The only result was a cold letter of acknowledgment and a banknote to cover the value. As everybody knows, Constable, who was a man not only of quality but of character, eventually 'made good,' married the girl, and received a legacy from his wife's grandfather of £4,000. These are but examples picked almost at random from the more important eighteenth-century exhibits."



The Preraffaelite pictures form the most striking part of the collection. And here to foreigners is the most "English" part of it. We read:

"Those who are old enough to remember the magnificent advocacy of John Ruskin, the hostility of the daily, weekly and monthly press, the spirited letters to editors, the impassioned replies and defenses, the heated discussions in exhibition rooms, the disturbing advent of Whistler, when wit and cynicism crossed swords with the fervent religious estheticism of the day, will find in the Port Sunlight Gallery a collection of Preraffaelite pictures once so notorious that they will appear as the embodiment in solid pigment of the phantasmagoria of the distant past. There is Ford Madox Brown's allegorical and yet peculiarly literal 'Cromwell on his Farm,' which occupied the artist no less than twenty-two years; there is Rossetti's poetic vision of 'The Blessed Damozel,' there is Holman Hunt's 'Scapegoat' to paint which he felt compelled, as now seems so unnecessary to us, to pay a special visit to the Holy Land. (What believers in 'local color' in the literary sense the Preraffaelites were!) There is the same artist's tremendous *tour-de-force*, 'May Morning on Magdalen Tower,' with its wonderful row of chubby and angelic choir boys and its startlingly rosy morning sky; there is Millais's 'Sir Isumbras at the Ford,' shown together with the original sketch, with the famous *Punch* cartoon of it, and with the sham antique poem that was the heart of the whole amazing undertaking; there is, last but not least, the once much-criticized 'Beguiling of Merlin,' by Sir Edward Burne-Jones. Besides these extraordinary works, which represent one of the most celebrated and the oddest movements in the whole history of modern art, there are many lesser Preraffaelite and related pictures and a number of drawings of the period, special emphasis being put on a series of studies by Burne-Jones.

"Whistler, unfortunately, is not represented, except by a small drawing. Lord Leverhulme latterly greatly desired to obtain at least one example of Whistler's art, for he saw that altho Whistler was an American, he so profoundly influenced English painting and so splendidly contributed to it, that no collection of English paintings is complete without an example of Whistler's art. However, except for the Whistlers in English public galleries, such as the Tate, England has few examples, and these scarcely ever appear in the sale rooms. America possesses by far the greater number and the best.

"Formerly the gallery did not contain any notable examples of Turner, but shortly before Lord Leverhulme's regrettable death last May, he had the good fortune to acquire a magnificent series of Turner water-colors which go far to fill a serious gap in the catalog. The remainder of the picture section of the gallery is occupied by a very large number of more modern paintings. These include, again, numerous well-known pictures, such as Pinwell's 'Gilbert à Beckett's Troth—The Saracen Maid,' Lord Leighton's gigantic 'The Daphnephoria,' Orchardson's 'The Young Duke,' and Hubert von Herkomer's highly descriptive 'The Last Master,' while more recent artists like Strang, Farrowson, and others, are well represented.

"In the modern work there is little included that is novel or experimental, but the modern pictures if they do not stand for artistic originality, certainly represent in a remarkable way the currents of taste that have, until quite recently, prevailed in England. Thus, as history, the whole collection may be regarded as both accurate and, humanly speaking, complete."

## TRAILING "MADAME SANS-GENE"

MOVIE FANS HAVE CONCEIVABLY FOUND Gloria Swanson masquerading under a puzzling, not to say jaw-breaking name, "Madame Sans-Gène!" How to pronounce it, and what it may mean, even devotees of the silver sheet may come away not much wiser. If any are disposed to run down the mystery there is much assistance rendered by a Hollywood publication called *Story World*, described as "a magazine of interpretation for writers." Here



"MAY MORNING ON MAGDALEN TOWER"

Druid and Christian England are thus merged each first of May when carols are sung from the top of Magdalen Tower in Oxford. Holman Hunt painted this *tour-de-force* with its "chubby and angelic choir boys."

Mr. Paul Hugon leads a trail that runs through "English, French, Greek, Hebrew, history, the Bible, Shakespeare, and a few other topics." His starting-point is the dictionary—"the bigger the better":

"To the dictionary, then, we turn to find all about *Madame Sans-Gène*, and there she is, in all her shameless glory. First the pronunciation; foreign sounds can never be shown accurately in a national system, but we may try:

"Madame is very much like 'Madam,' except that the two a's receive equal emphasis, and that they are spoken with the mouth a little more widely open.

"Sans contains a nose-sound not found in English. Try to say 'sawn' without sounding the n, or 'sang' without sounding the g.

"Gène. First say the words *measure, treasure, vision*; do you hear that sound zh? The *ê* of *gène* is pronounced half-way between the *e* in *set* and the *ai* in *fair*—*zhén*.

"Now we have the whole bag of tricks: 'Mad-am sân(g) zhen.' What does it mean? We find: 'sans-gène,' adjective, 'without constraint or embarrassment; easy'; and underneath, 'Madame Sans-Gène, Catherine, wife of Marshal Lefebvre, she having been the company washerwoman when he, a sergeant, married her; a nickname alluding to her simple and rough manners and free language.' (Webster's New International.)

"There it stops, and there most people will stop, because they are too (shall we say?) careless to search any further. But that is just where the real fun begins. Unless we take the habit of going beyond Webster, we shall not acquire much original knowledge.

"Therefore we look for a Pedigree-Book of English Words,



and we are instantly rewarded, for in Weekley's 'Etymological Dictionary' we find 'French *gêne*, constraint; see *gehenna*.'

"Gehenna! We are getting somewhere; we have found a word commonly used in English. Back, this time to the English dictionary, to the Bible concordance, to the Teacher's Bible, to any one of a dozen books. Gehenna! Twelve times we find the word in the American Standard Bible, but not once in the King James (Authorized) version. Why is that? We search further, and find that Gehenna is a Greek word. Greek was the language of Palestine two thousand years ago. In that Greek word Gehenna, we recognize a double Hebrew name Ge-Hinnom (the valley or canyon of a man named Hinnom). It was in Ge-Hinnom or Gehenna, just outside Jerusalem, that the worshipers of Baal and Moloch used to offer human sacrifices, killing their children to honor their gods.

"Two thousand years ago, Ge-Hinnom, or Gehenna, had become the city garbage dump, the place where the fires burned perpetually, to destroy the ill-smelling piles—'Garbage Canyon' or 'Skunk Canyon,' as we would call it in California. Hence it came to signify a place of torture. . . .

"Now we know why Gehenna is found in the modern Bible,



"AN IDYL OF THE '45"

One of Sir John E. Millais's pictures now in the Lady Lever Gallery, Port Sunlight. Millais was elected president of the Royal Academy in 1896.

and not in the old one: because it can not be accurately translated, and because the old word 'hell' means something quite different, and indeed is often used to render the word 'Sheol' (the place of the departed), where both the good and the bad were supposed to go after death, to be sorted out according to their deeds.

"'Madam Without-Gehenna,' 'Madam No-Hell'—what has that to do with Devil-May-Care?"

Whereupon the writer refers us to "a historical book like the New English Dictionary, or the French Littré, both of which give actual quotations from authors of every consecutive period." Then we go on:

"*Gêne* (formerly spelled *gehine*, *jaine*, *gehenne*, *gesne*, *geyne*) was first used when speaking of the torture of prisoners to extract confessions: 'to submit a prisoner to *gehenna*' meant to put him through the third degree. Later it meant blackmail; later still, great pains, mental agony, physical suffering or even mere inconvenience. In that sense it is still used in modern French, where the phrase 'I am not comfortable in this hat' would be rendered, 'This hat *gêne* me.'

"After a while, the word was used particularly when referring to the annoyance (as it is, in one of those tiny flats in Paris) of having house-guests; and a guest was said to be without *gêne* when he made himself so much at home that he did not care how much he inconvenienced the others. A man who comes into

your office when you are out, sits at your desk and smokes your cigars is *sans-gêne* or has a degree of *sans-gêne*. A butter-in is a *sans-gêne* person; one who borrows your car without permission shows his *sans-gêne*.

"Thus it was that Madame Sans-Gêne horrified Paris by bringing the manners of the laundry into the drawing-room. We should never have understood the full meaning of the phrase, however, if we had been content to stop at the dictionary."

## RECALLING "LORNA DOONE"

WHO READS "LORNA DOONE"? Modern fiction probably makes it seem paler than it otherwise would, but it no doubt has its devotees still. The centenary of its author, occurring on June 7, 1925, turns the attention to this if to any of Richard Blackmore's novels, and we find the curious story of its rise to fame in the columns of the *London Observer*, written by Mr. J. L. Garvin. Blackmore did not begin writing fiction until his fortieth year and then he "wrote for over half a decade without making his name." Mr. Garvin adds:

"He might never have made it but for an irrelevant stroke of luck, surpassing any improbability that a modern novelist dare bring into his plot. At the end of the '60s he wrote 'Lorna Doone.' It was destined to run into scores of editions and millions of copies, to be read throughout the English-speaking world, and to become as inseparable from the western moors as Dunkery Beacon. No such success of its kind has been achieved since Scott. Among historical novels 'Lorna Doone' has had more readers than 'Esmond' or 'The Cloister and the Hearth.'

"But for eighteen months after it appeared, the book seemed a dead failure. The publishers lost money. The critics shrugged. The chief journals damned it with faint praise. Then, in the spring of 1871, Princess Louise married the Marquis of Lorne, with whose title Blackmore had imagined his heroine to be connected. He had not the faintest suspicion that what he meant for pure fantasy would come to be associated by the incomprehensible public with a national event then altogether unforeseen. Popular sentiment had been carried away by this royal wedding. As Blackmore himself said, it gave his novel 'golden wings.' 'So grand,' he added, in

his sturdy way, 'is the luck of time and name, failing which more solid beings melt into oblivion's depth.' He resented the manner of his good fortune, and it made him unfair to his own creation. For a long time he profest to think that 'Lorna Doone' would soon be forgotten. He maintained that two at least of his other novels, especially 'The Maid of Sker' and 'Springhaven,' were superior. Of course, he was wrong. There is hardly one of his novels that the present writer has not read with pleasure; there is something as wholesome as a fresh morning in every one of them. They breathe wide air. He knows the earth and the elements like a naturalist, a sportsman and a farmer. But they do not live of themselves.

"'Lorna Doone' took the world by storm after the world's attention was accidentally drawn to it, and is still alive and gay after half a century. There is a bunch of good reasons for that sequel. It is not great, but apart from being delightful it is considerable indeed. It has some long-winded pages which you can skip with impunity. Any honest reader pursuing his enjoyment knows how to take short-cuts at certain windings of the road in most of the classical novelists. The romance is as irresponsible as a fairy-tale, which is just what makes it taking. Every effect is heightened. If you tramp up Badgeworthy stream to find the hold of the Doones, you will not see the sinister waters nor the rock-walled valley of your dreams. In these matters 'Lorna Doone' cares no more for realism than does the 'Arabian Nights.' For sentiment Blackmore belongs to the age of innocence by comparison with modern novelists. Perhaps he errs on that side not more than they do on the other. A



genuine romantic in his heart of hearts, he made a venturesome love match of his own in his twenties, and when his wife died forty years after he met her, he tried to the end of his longer days to keep the house as she left it."

### MISS LOWELL'S HEART-BREAKS

MISS AMY LOWELL was subject to heart-break. It was one of her feminine traits to express herself that way. She suffered the same calamity when she saw that her subjunctive had been abolished by the proof-reader, so Dr. Clifford Smyth points out in *The Literary Digest International Book Review*. Therefore the evidence of her letter to Mr. Clement Shorter of the *London Sphere* that Gosse's review of her "John Keats" "broke her heart" proves more than the facts, as well as more than she intended. Dr. Smyth takes the same ground regarding her that she took regarding Keats, that it was no "article" that could snuff her out. Mr. Shorter made a very gallant defense of Miss Lowell and her "Keats" against the London critics, as we showed in our issue of June 27; but he was too wrought up over Miss Lowell's extravagant representation of her feelings, and didn't know her as the fighter she was. Thus Dr. Smyth:

"Doubtless Mr. Shorter writes in this melodramatic vein from a sincerely friendly attitude toward Miss Lowell herself, and a correspondingly indignant feeling aroused by those reviewers who, as he sees it, have failed in their appreciation of her 'John Keats.' Thus to write of Miss Lowell, however, is to impute to her a weakness of character, a lack of critical fortitude and tenacity, that were the very reverse of the strength and fearlessness which were always prominent qualities in her brilliant and often stormy literary career. If there ever was a writer who most decidedly could not be 'snuffed out by an article,' it was assuredly this woman who, through creative talents of a high order linked with a critical faculty singularly efficient in its constructiveness, has won for herself an altogether unique position in her country's literature. Had she been otherwise, had she been handicapped with the morbidly sensitive nature attributed to her by Mr. Shorter, a nature vulnerable to every chance criticism that the makers of literature must inevitably encounter, it is hardly conceivable that she would have chosen deliberately to champion the cause from the very first of so radical a departure from comfortable conservatism as that offered by the so-called New Poetry movement, or that she would have undertaken the writing of a life of Keats that ran counter, as she better than any one else must have known it would, to the accepted Keats tradition. Doubtless, in common with every sincere writer and teacher, Miss Lowell valued and welcomed whatever conversions she might win to her way of thinking. But if she failed of popular approval, or if the average critic scoffed at her ideals and theories (as they have done time and again) she was not one to bewail her fate or spinelessly to shrink from further combat."

She took her literary work "with an intense and whole-hearted seriousness" that had nothing of the dilettante about it, Dr. Smyth declares. In fact—

"She lived in and for her ideas, and this passionate absorption was impress in almost her every written and spoken word. In a long series of her letters, extending over a period of some six years, and having to do, in the main, with the publication of occasional articles, poems, reviews, etc., I find recurring evidence of this attitude, as for instance when she writes, characteristically, regarding a review she had just sent me: 'If you want it shortened,

I can shorten it, but I must ask you to let me make any changes myself, if there are any, which I hope there will not be. I never consent to have any one else change a word in what I have written, not even a title, a rule of mine which is unalterable and which I am sure you will not object to,' etc. Later on, and in regard to the printing of another article, a verbal change did manage to creep in without her or my knowledge. Here is her comment—and, be it noted, she concludes with the same despairing phrase in regard to this matter that Mr. Shorter reports her to have used in connection with Gosse's review of her 'John Keats': 'You made one mistake in the second paragraph. I wrote "if our knowledge include the work of such men," your proof-reader put "if our knowledge includes the work of such men." May I suggest that "suppositions contrary to fact take the subjunctive," this being the one grammatical rule I have remembered from my



"UNA AND THE RED CROSS KNIGHT"

G. F. Watts, the painter, was one of the greatest figures in British art of the nineteenth century. This painting is now in the Lady Lever Gallery.

school days. In other words, sentences beginning with "if" should take the subjunctive. My heart broke when I saw that. You see what a terrible person you have to deal with."

"A number of years after this 'heart-breaking' grammatical slip there occurred the accidental and unfortunate transposition of certain lines in Miss Lowell's poem, 'The Congressional Library,' published in the initial number of the *International Book Review*. Miss Lowell had very graciously and particularly wanted to appear among the first contributors to this magazine, and her poem for the occasion was especially welcome in view of the fact that she had announced her intention of writing nothing further for magazines or newspapers until her 'John Keats' was finished and published. That any accident should have befallen her admirable poem, 'The Congressional Library,' therefore, was felt quite as keenly by me as it was by her, and I was only too glad to make whatever reparation was possible. I doubted the wisdom, however, of republishing the poem in its entirety, fearing, for her sake, that it would afford her critics too easy an opportunity for ridicule. To this she made the following significant reply: 'I am awfully sorry to bother you in this way, but it means a lot to me. I am not in the least afraid of the "columnists"; they have done their worst with me for ten years, and I seem uninjured. You see, there may conscientiously be some among your readers who would like to have the poem right, and, as I told you, I am not preparing a volume of miscellaneous poems for some time, so that, in all probability (barring anthologies) yours will be the only version in print for some time, and naturally I want that version to be without mistakes.'"